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Director, Foreign Broadcast
Information Service

DATE

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17 May 1985

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and
building)

DATE

RECEIVED FORWARDER

OFFICER'S
INITIALSCOMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom
to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)1. Deputy Director for
Science and Technology
Room 6E45 - Headquarters

2. (ATTN: [redacted])

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Evan:

Interesting that a Carter administration official now praises FBIS as "often the only source of information about what was going on in Tehran." During the Iranian crisis we got nary a word from the NSC about the rather extensive FBIS contribution. (See page two of the attachment.) I guess it was such a disaster for that administration that no one felt like passing out kudos.

STAT

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D/FBIS



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About the Author

GARY G. SICK, the principal White House aide for Iran during the Iranian revolution and the hostage crisis, served on the National Security Council staff under Presidents Ford, Carter and Reagan. He is a captain (ret.) in the U.S. Navy, with service in the Persian Gulf, North Africa and the Mediterranean. Mr. Sick, a Ph.D. in political science from Columbia University and a member of Phi Beta Kappa, is at present with the Ford Foundation, where he is responsible for programs relating to U.S. foreign policy. He is adjunct professor of Middle East politics at Columbia University.

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GARY SICK

All Fall Down

**AMERICA'S
TRAGIC ENCOUNTER
WITH IRAN**



RANDOM HOUSE NEW YORK

4. See Jordan, p. 165, and Carter, p. 488.
5. A five-point statement of the U.S. position was delivered to Secretary General Waldheim on New Years Eve, 1979. On January 12, that statement was expanded considerably to take account of reports that some of the more nationalist members of the Revolutionary Council were anxious to persuade Khomeini to end the crisis in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.
6. See Jordan, pp. 142-44.
7. Archbishop Capucci of Jerusalem had once been jailed in Israel for alleged gunrunning to Palestinians. Ironically, in one of the twists that seemed to pop up repeatedly in the hostage crisis, Capucci's lawyer on that occasion was Christian Bourguet. Capucci's clerical and political background gave him special status and credibility in revolutionary Iran.
8. See, for example, Robert D. McFadden, *No Hiding Place*, New York: Times Books, 1981, pp. 130-31.
9. In fact, many of the leaders of the revolutionary movement had met with embassy officials during that period, as the United States attempted to expand its contacts among opposition groups. Since only the "students" had access to the embassy files, they were in a position to blackmail their political opponents. The Minachi arrest was a clear warning to others who might oppose them.
10. Out of consideration for his safety, I never used this man's name even in my reporting memos inside the White House. His identity was—and will remain—known only to the two of us.
11. See the chapter by Harold Saunders in Warren Christopher, *et al.*, p. 84.
12. The work that was initiated at this point proved invaluable later in the year when substantive negotiations began.
13. This was a serious tactical blunder. Apparently Ghotbzadeh had told Khomeini of his intentions to take custody of the hostages. The old man had listened silently, which Ghotbzadeh took as approval. When he was later challenged on this point, he had to admit that he had only "indirect" approval. Khomeini's office, in the meantime, issued a statement that "the Imam . . . prefers to remain silent on this . . ." Despite this contretemps, however, the official offer to transfer custody of the hostages seemed to remain valid.
14. See Salinger, *America Held Hostage*, pp. 178-85.
15. The details of these hectic few days are recounted in detail in Jordan, pp. 195-227. For a slightly different account as seen by Bourguet and the shah's entourage, see Salinger, pp. 187-216.
16. The Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) is a service of the U.S. government. This remarkable organization monitors ordinary commercial radio broadcasts throughout the world and provides almost instantaneous translations of important items, which are made available on a subscription basis to news organizations, research institutions and interested citizens, as well as the government. These reports provide an extraordinary wealth of timely information on political and economic developments around the world. The speed and accuracy with which complex texts were translated and transmitted never ceased to amaze me. Often, FBIS was the only source of information about what was going on in Tehran. The men and women of FBIS are among that large band of unsung heroes who do vitally important work but seldom receive any credit.
17. Many journalists contended that this decision was deliberately timed to coincide with the Wisconsin primary on April 1 and that it represented a cynical manipulation

tion of the hostage situation as part of the conventional war as do all of the participants in the summary of the events. It is a more balanced perspective.

1. John D. Stempel, who was serving as chargé d'affaires at the U.S. embassy in Tehran during the crisis, argued that through channels both formal and informal, an argument can be made that the United States was unturned in seeking a peaceful resolution of the crisis. The President and his national security advisor minimized the influence of the Iranian revolutionaries in Iran and we whether pressing to negotiate a deal would be effective. (pp. 296-97).
2. The core members of the National Security Council (Harold Brown, Director of Defense Planning; James Schlesinger, Director of Central Intelligence; and General Jones), and
3. Brzezinski had proposed a military strike against Iran, but the proposal was rejected, he later after securing Van Der Meulen's support. (pp. 489-90.) The background of its positive findings is discussed in detail in *New York Times*, Jan. 1980, p. 1.
4. Vance, *Hard Choices*, p. 408.
5. New York Times, Feb. 1980, p. 1.
6. New York Times, Feb. 1980, p. 1.
7. *Ibid.*
8. See Vance, p. 410.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Brzezinski, p. 494.
11. Vance, p. 408.
12. Because the helicopters were flying over the desert, the crew could not be aware that the crew could not be aware of the fate of this crew was unknown.
13. The following description is based on information from four firsthand accounts: *New York Times*, Jan. 1980, p. 1; and Vance, pp. 408-10.
14. The selection of the De Gaulle as the target was a criticism later. An extensive search was conducted within a prescribed date of the eight C-130s and a plan had been developed to seize the plane and drop it in the sea. The plan had called for seizure of the plane and dropping it in the sea. The plan had been dropped in January in favor of the option of a military strike.